

Decorating & Design

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The Ultimate Guide To Spring Cleaning

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If the words “spring cleaning” strike fear in your heart (or at least cause a wave of to do list-inspired stress!), we’ve got good news: organizing expert Marie Potter, the director of marketing for [Professional Organizers in Canada](#), has plenty of easy-to-follow advice for conquering clutter. “Spring is the perfect opportunity to release and refresh,” she says. “To keep things simple, break up spring clearing into two main steps. The first step is to reduce and the second step is to ease accessibility. Typically step one can eliminate 15% to 50% of your stuff, which makes step two exponentially easier.” Click through for her best advice and to find her must-see spring cleaning checklist.



1. Purge, purge, purge. “The process of spring cleaning starts with getting rid of what you don’t use, love or need. Living with less means you’ll find things more quickly, your home will be easier to clean and the space will energize you,” says Marie. Pay particular attention to the most hardworking spaces in your home: entrances, the garage, closets, workshops, storage spaces — like the basement, pantry or crawlspace — and kids’ playrooms.

Photographer: Angus Fergusson

Source: House & Home April 2013 issue

Products:

Bench, Kantelberg & Co.; baskets, Bacon Basketware; mirror, Angus & Company; rug, EQ3; pendant light, box (on shelf), L'Atelier; bowls (on shelf), Elte; door handle, The Salvage Shop; blind shelf supports, Lee Valley; accordion hanger, Peaks & Rafters; umbrellas, Raindrops; wall colour, Pointing (2003), door colour, Parma Gray (27), shelf colour, Pitch Black (256), Farrow & Ball.

Designer: Sarah Hartill



2. Be ruthless. Once you've decided on what to get rid of, Marie suggests getting your "no" pile out of the house immediately so it doesn't migrate back into your newly-organized space. Your options include donation, consigning, selling, returning, repairing, recycling, upcycling or, if you must, tossing.

Photographer: Virginia Macdonald
Source: House & Home March 2011 issue
Designer: Christine Ralphs

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3. Assign everything a home. The next step is wrangling the things you're keeping. Decide what goes where "based on proximity and ease of use," Marie says. She recommends labeling (where it makes sense) to help everyone return items to their proper places. This is also the time to rotate your seasonal gear, replacing snow shovels and winter boots with garden tools, sports equipment and camping accessories.

Photographer: Michael Graydon
Source: House & Home July 2012 issue
Products:

Pegboard system, Rona; border fork, slim draw hoe, Haws vase, Lee Valley; kitchen cart, tea towels (as curtains), curtain wire with clips, galvanized plant pot, galvanized watering can, Ikea; terracotta pots and trays, wicker tray, crate of terracotta pots, terracotta candle in wire basket, Bacon Basketware; tree, Sheridan Nurseries.

Designer: Stacey Begg and Lauren Petroff



4. Zone in on closets. Maybe it's just us, but clutter always seems to gravitate towards closets. Marie's number one rule for keeping them tidy: "Don't have anything in the closet that should be located somewhere else in the house!" And think of the closet's square footage as a natural limit; if yours are overflowing, it's probably time to purge.

Photographer: Donna Griffith

Source: House & Home January 2014 issue

Products: Shelving design, Mazen Studio; shelving fabrication, Mar-Tec Woodworking; basket, Hollace Cluny.

Designer: Mazen El-Abdallah



5. Make it easy on yourself. First of all, enlist help — whoever lives in your house can pitch in, even kids! Next, create a cleaning caddy stocked with cleaning products, rags, gloves, brushes and toothbrushes, so you never have to go looking for the right tools. This professional [bond back cleaning](#) company does a great job in deep cleaning and uses the best products. And finally, follow a cleaning checklist. Marie's standard list for spring includes the following items, but feel free to customize based on your home's needs:

- Wipe or wash outdoor furniture
- Wash windows
- Wipe down doors & light switches
- Wipe or dust artwork
- Use the dust brush attachment to vacuum bookshelves, blinds and the tops of books and window frames
- Launder or dry-clean bedding, pillows, duvets, mattress pads and unlined curtains
- Clean light fixtures
- Shake out carpets
- Air out quilts & pillows
- Flip your mattress (This should be done every quarter, rotating the mattress end of end and side over side)
- Clear out the freezer and fridge
- Mend or repair items that need to get back into service
- Check smoke detectors and flashlight batteries
- Revisit emergency kits
- Empty central vacuum or replace vacuum bag if full

Photographer: Michael Graydon

Source: House & Home August 2014 issue

Products: Storage installation, Ikea Installation Services; cabinets, armchair, rugs, boxes, Ikea.

Designer: Sarah Hartill

Author: Stacy Lee Kong

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